

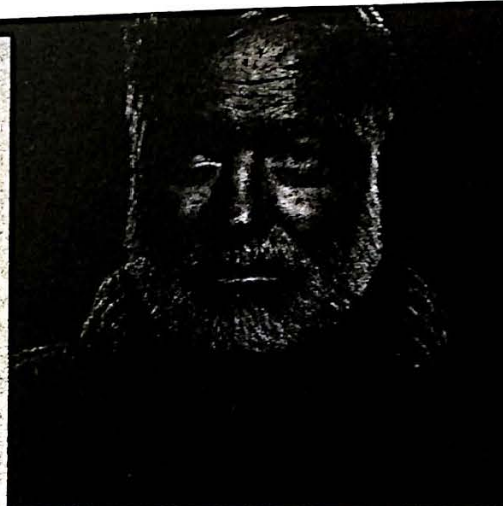
## Ernest Hemingway

(1899–1961)

**F**ew American authors have offered as powerful a definition of the twentieth-century hero as Ernest Hemingway has. Hemingway's fiction presents a strict code of contemporary heroism. His vision centers on disillusionment with the conventions of an optimistic, patriotic society and a belief that the essence of life is violence, from which there is no refuge. As Hemingway saw it, the only victory that can be won from life lies in a graceful stoicism, a willingness to accept gratefully life's few moments of pleasure.

Although this ideal of rugged machismo may now seem superficial, it powerfully affected generations of American readers. Moreover, Hemingway launched a new style of writing so forceful in its simplicity that it became a measure of excellence around the world.

Hemingway's life, like F. Scott Fitzgerald's, bore a notable resemblance to the lives of his fictional characters. He was born in the Chicago suburb of Oak Park on July 21, 1899. His father, a doctor, initiated him early into a love for the Michigan woods and the hunting and fishing that could be found there. Growing up, Hemingway boxed and played football devotedly, but he also wrote poetry, short stories, and a column for the school newspaper. Graduating from high school in 1917, just as the United States entered World War I, he yearned to enlist, but he was rejected by the army because of a boxing injury to his eye. He landed a job as a reporter for *The Kansas City Star*. Hemingway reached the war a year later as an ambulance driver for the Red Cross in Italy, but after six weeks he was wounded in the knee, seriously enough to require a dozen operations. This wound was a central episode in both Hemingway's real life and his creative



one. During his long convalescence in an Italian hospital, he fell in love with a nurse who became the model for the heroine of his novel *A Farewell to Arms*.

After the armistice in 1918, Hemingway returned to Michigan. His experience of coming to terms with the war is reflected in his story "Big Two-Hearted River." In the story, Nick Adams, a war veteran, camps and fishes alone in the woods, escaping from the world in order to heal himself from both a physical and a psychological shattering.

### An American in Paris

In 1921, newly married and with a commission as a roving reporter for *The Toronto Star*, Hemingway set off for Paris. It was the era of the American expatriates, when writers and painters crowded the cafes of the Left Bank of the Seine. Here Hemingway worked at the craft of fiction and met other important writers, among them F. Scott Fitzgerald, James Joyce, and Ezra Pound. But most important, he met the American writer Gertrude Stein (1874–1946). She read all his work and advised him to prune his descriptions and to "concentrate." Hemingway took her advice and spoke fervently of writing "the truest sentence that you know" and of arriving through straight presentation of unvarnished fact at a "true, simple declarative sentence."



Hemingway's first book, *Three Stories and Ten Poems* (1923), along with *The Torrents of Spring* (1926), a parody of his friend Sherwood Anderson's work, drew scant notice. Then, late in 1926, he published *The Sun Also Rises*, a novel based on his life in Paris but transplanted to Pamplona, the Spanish town famous for its annual running of the bulls through the streets. The novel brought Hemingway widespread critical attention. Gertrude Stein's remark, "You are all a lost generation," was the novel's epigraph, and the book did reveal the postwar epoch to itself. Many readers of Hemingway's age embraced it as a portrait of their shattered lives.

Hemingway, around thirty years old and married for the second time, went on to write an even more powerful and successful novel, *A Farewell to Arms* (1929). This is the beautifully told story of Frederic Henry, a wounded ambulance driver. Disillusioned with the war, he falls in love with Catherine Barkley, an English nurse, and flees with her to Switzerland, where she dies in childbirth. Frederic's farewell to the dying Catherine is one of the great love scenes in fiction.

### **Author and Adventurer**

After the major success of *A Farewell to Arms*, Hemingway established himself as a worldwide adventurer, as though a heroic style was as important to his life as to his fiction.

During the early 1930s, Hemingway brought out two nonfiction books that revealed his fascination with bullfighting and big-game hunting—*Death in the Afternoon* (1932) and *Green Hills of Africa* (1935). In 1940, just as the literary world was writing Hemingway off as a has-been novelist, he presented another triumph, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

The outbreak of World War II drew Hemingway back into uniform. Although officially a correspondent, he gathered around himself a small army of adventurers. During one battle, Hemingway's band was sixty miles in front of

the Americans' advancing line. When the Allies at last reached Paris in 1944, they found that Hemingway had already "liberated" the bar at the Ritz Hotel.

By 1952, Hemingway's celebrated literary accomplishments and his continuous pursuit of excitement and danger had made him as famous as any film star. In spite of his flamboyant exploits, he produced yet another widely acclaimed novel in that year, *The Old Man and the Sea*, which won the 1953 Pulitzer Prize. It tells of an old Cuban fisherman who hooks a giant marlin far out at sea and battles the fish for two days and nights. Although he finally succeeds in subduing the great fish and lashing it to the side of his boat, sharks tear at the carcass until the man is left with only the marlin's skeleton. The tale has been interpreted as Hemingway's metaphor for life: a vision of the hero weighed down by the years but still able to use his skill to taunt fate and so win a kind of victory from it.

In 1954, Hemingway won the Nobel Prize in literature. He now divided his time between his house in Ketchum, Idaho, and his restless travels all over the world: to Cuba, China, Venice, Spain, and Africa. His health deteriorated, and periods of elation alternated with episodes of severe depression. After a visit to the Mayo Clinic for treatment, he returned to Idaho. On the morning of July 2, 1961, he rose early, and with two charges of a double-barreled shotgun, he killed himself.

"He put life back on the page," wrote the critic Alfred Kazin, "made us see, feel, and taste the gift of life. . . . To read Hemingway was always to feel more alive."

### **For Independent Reading**

Try these famous novels by Hemingway:

- *A Farewell to Arms*
- *For Whom the Bell Tolls*
- *The Old Man and the Sea*



# Before You Read

## Soldier's Home

### Make the Connection

World War I was greeted as the “war to end all wars,” and songs like “Over There” celebrated the heroism of hundreds of thousands of American soldiers who were shipped off to fight in the trenches of Europe. But advances in weaponry made the Great War (a name it held until World War II) devastating, both physically and psychologically. Returning soldiers sometimes couldn’t readjust to life back home, which seemed to offer little they could relate to or believe in. As you can imagine, some became disillusioned, cynical, isolated, and overwhelmed by hopelessness. They became the most lost of Gertrude Stein’s lost generation.

### Literary Focus

#### Protagonist: The Antihero

In literature the **protagonist** is the main actor in the plot, the one who initiates the story’s action. The protagonist need not be a hero. In fact, the antihero is a type of protagonist who appears in much modern literature. The **antihero** contrasts with the hero archetype, or model, which appears over and over again in the traditional literature of many cultures. The traditional hero responds to challenges with courage and self-sacrifice. The modern antihero gives in to disillusionment, hopelessness, and inaction.

The **protagonist** is the central character of a work of literature. Heroes are protagonists, but not all protagonists are heroes. Some may be antiheroes.

*For more on Protagonist, see the Handbook of Literary and Historical Terms.*

### Reading Skills

#### Reading for Details

As you read the story, try to piece together a **character profile** of the returned soldier Harold Krebs. Take notes on Krebs’s feelings, attitudes, and views on the war, his return home, his family, other people, his hometown, and his future.

### Background

Soldiers who returned home from World War I were often described as shellshocked—suffering from a mental and emotional condition of confusion, exhaustion, anxiety, and depression. In the past the condition—now termed *post-traumatic stress disorder*—was not well understood, and friends and relatives often found themselves at a loss. They could not understand why some soldiers seemed unable to plunge back into civilian life.

### Vocabulary Development

**hysteria** (hi·ster’ē·ə) *n.*: uncontrolled excitement.

**atrocities** (ə·trās’ə·tē) *n.* used as *adj.*: horrible; brutal.

**apocryphal** (ə·pāk’rə·fəl) *adj.*: of questionable authority; false.

**alliances** (ə·lī’əns·iz) *n. pl.*: close associations entered into for mutual benefit.

**intrigue** (in’treg’) *n.*: scheming; plotting.



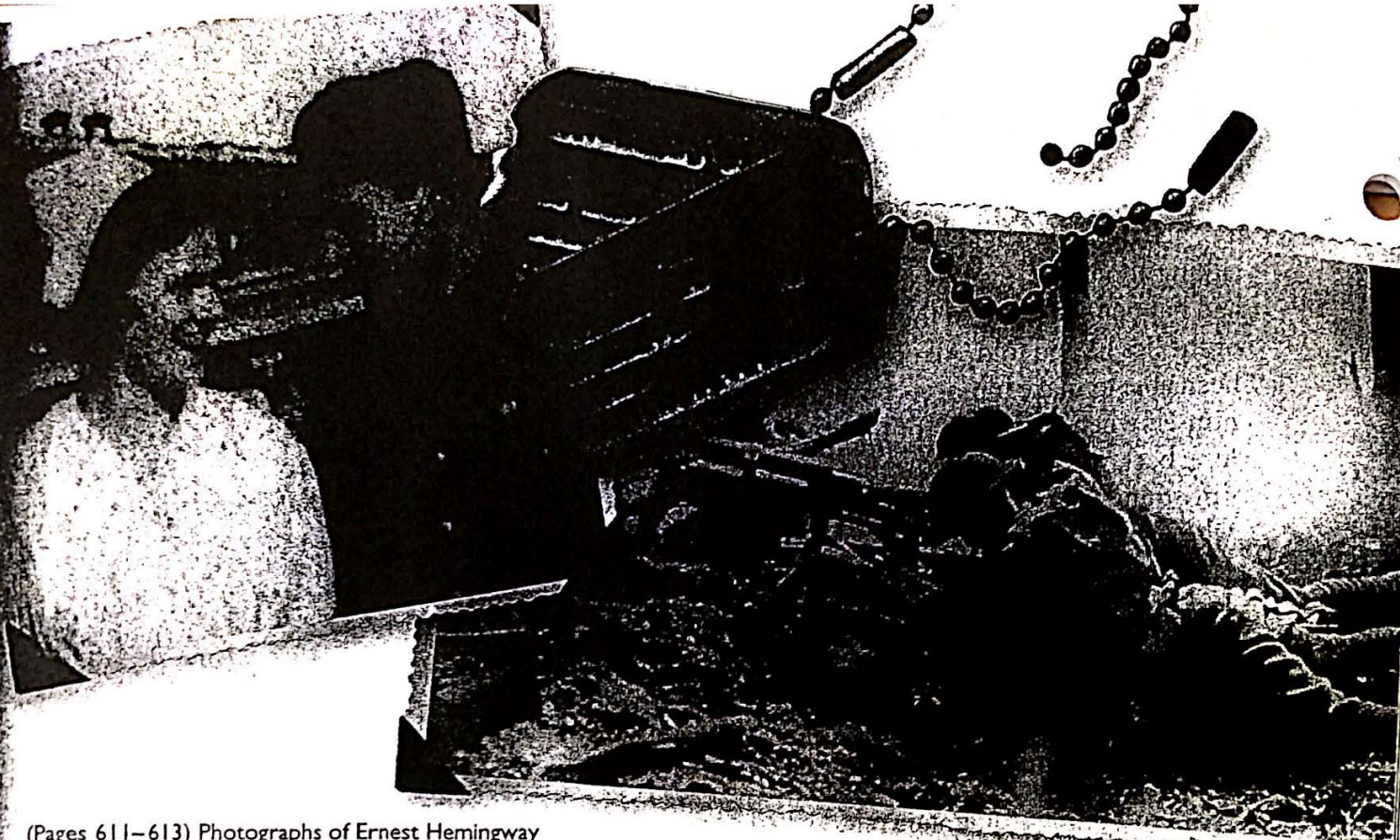
#### Reading Standard 3.5c

Evaluate the political, ethical, and social influences of the historical period that shaped the characters, plots, and settings.

#### Reading Standard 3.6

Analyze the way in which authors through the centuries have used archetypes drawn from myth and tradition in literature.





(Pages 611–613) Photographs of Ernest Hemingway in Italy and France during World War I (1918).

# Soldier's Home

Ernest Hemingway

**K**rebs went to the war from a Methodist college in Kansas. There is a picture which shows him among his fraternity brothers, all of them wearing exactly the same height and style collar. He enlisted in the Marines in 1917 and did not return to the United States until the second division returned from the Rhine<sup>1</sup> in the summer of 1919.

There is a picture which shows him on the Rhine with two German girls and another corporal. Krebs and the corporal look too big for their uniforms. The German girls are not beautiful. The Rhine does not show in the picture.

By the time Krebs returned to his home town in Oklahoma the greeting of heroes was over.

1. Rhine: river that flows through Germany toward the North Sea.

He came back much too late. The men from the town who had been drafted had all been welcomed elaborately on their return. There had been a great deal of hysteria. Now the reaction had set in. People seemed to think it was rather ridiculous for Krebs to be getting back so late, years after the war was over.

At first Krebs, who had been at Belleau Wood, Soissons, the Champagne, St. Mihiel and in the Argonne<sup>2</sup> did not want to talk about the war at all. Later he felt the need to talk but no one

2. Belleau (be·lō') Wood . . . Argonne (ār'gān'): sites of World War I battles that demonstrated the Allies' superior strength against the Germans.

## Vocabulary

**hysteria** (hi·ster'ē·ə) *n.*: uncontrolled excitement.



wanted to hear about it. His town had heard too many atrocities stories to be thrilled by actualities. Krebs found that to be listened to at all he had to lie, and after he had done this twice he, too, had a reaction against the war and against talking about it. A distaste for everything that had happened to him in the war set in because of the lies he had told. All of the times that had been able to make him feel cool and clear inside himself when he thought of them; the times so long back when he had done the one thing, the only thing for a man to do, easily and naturally, when he might have done something else, now lost their cool, valuable quality and then were lost themselves.

His lies were quite unimportant lies and consisted in attributing to himself things other men had seen, done or heard of, and stating as facts certain apocryphal incidents familiar to all soldiers. Even his lies were not sensational at the pool room. His acquaintances, who had heard detailed accounts of German women found chained to machine guns in the Argonne forest and who could not comprehend, or were barred by their patriotism from interest in, any German machine gunners who were not chained, were not thrilled by his stories.

Krebs acquired the nausea in regard to experience that is the result of untruth or exaggeration, and when he occasionally met another man who had really been a soldier and they talked a few minutes in the dressing room at a dance he fell into the easy pose of the old soldier among other soldiers: that he had been badly, sickeningly frightened all the time. In this way he lost everything.

During this time, it was late summer, he was sleeping late in bed, getting up to walk down town to the library to get a book, eating lunch at home, reading on the front porch until he became bored and then walking down through the town to spend the hottest hours of the day in the cool dark of the pool room. He loved to play pool.

In the evening he practised on his clarinet, strolled down town, read and went to bed. He was still a hero to his two young sisters. His



mother would have given him breakfast in bed if he had wanted it. She often came in when he was in bed and asked him to tell her about the war, but her attention always wandered. His father was non-committal.

Before Krebs went away to the war he had never been allowed to drive the family motor car. His father was in the real estate business and always wanted the car to be at his command when he required it to take clients out into the country to show them a piece of farm property. The car always stood outside the First National Bank building where his father had an office on

#### Vocabulary

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**apocryphal** (ə·pāk'rə·fəl) *adj.*: of questionable authority; false.





the second floor. Now, after the war, it was still the same car.

Nothing was changed in the town except that the young girls had grown up. But they lived in such a complicated world of already defined alliances and shifting feuds that Krebs did not feel the energy or the courage to break into it. He liked to look at them, though. There were so many good-looking young girls. Most of them had their hair cut short. When he went away only little girls wore their hair like that or girls that were fast. They all wore sweaters and shirt waists with round Dutch collars. It was a pattern. He liked to look at them from the front porch as they walked on the other side of the street. He liked to watch them walking under the shade of the trees. He liked the round Dutch collars above their sweaters. He liked their silk

stockings and flat shoes. He liked their bobbed hair and the way they walked.

When he was in town their appeal to him was not very strong. He did not like them when he saw them in the Greek's ice cream parlor. He did not want them themselves really. They were too complicated. There was something else. Vaguely he wanted a girl but he did not want to have to work to get her. He would have liked to have a girl but he did not want to have to spend a long time getting her. He did not want to get into the intrigue and the politics. He did not want to have to do any courting. He did not want to tell any more lies. It wasn't worth it."

He did not want any consequences. He did not want any consequences ever again. He wanted to live along without consequences. Besides he did not really need a girl. The army had taught him that. It was all right to pose as though you had to have a girl. Nearly everybody did that. But it wasn't true. You did not need a girl. That was the funny thing. First a fellow boasted how girls mean nothing to him, that he never thought of them, that they could not touch him. Then a fellow boasted that he could not get along without girls, that he had to have them all the time, that he could not go to sleep without them.

That was all a lie. It was all a lie both ways. You did not need a girl unless you thought about them. He learned that in the army. Then sooner or later you always got one. When you were really ripe for a girl you always got one. You did not have to think about it. Sooner or later it would come. He had learned that in the army.

Now he would have liked a girl if she had come to him and not wanted to talk. But here at home it was all too complicated. He knew he could never get through it all again. It was not worth the trouble. That was the thing about French girls and German girls. There was not all this talking. You couldn't talk much and you did not need to talk. It was simple and you were

#### Vocabulary

**alliances** (ə·li'əns·iz) *n. pl.*: close associations entered into for mutual benefit.

**intrigue** (in'trēg') *n.*: scheming; plotting.



friends. He thought about France and then he began to think about Germany. On the whole he had liked Germany better. He did not want to leave Germany. He did not want to come home. Still, he had come home. He sat on the front porch.

He liked the girls that were walking along the other side of the street. He liked the look of them much better than the French girls or the German girls. But the world they were in was not the world he was in. He would like to have one of them. But it was not worth it. They were such a nice pattern. He liked the pattern. It was exciting. But he would not go through all the talking. He did not want one badly enough. He liked to look at them all, though. It was not worth it. Not now when things were getting good again.

He sat there on the porch reading a book on the war. It was a history and he was reading about all the engagements he had been in. It was the most interesting reading he had ever

done. He wished there were more maps. He looked forward with a good feeling to reading all the really good histories when they would come out with good detail maps. Now he was really learning about the war. He had been a good soldier. That made a difference.

One morning after he had been home about a month his mother came into his bedroom and sat on the bed. She smoothed her apron.

"I had a talk with your father last night, Harold," she said, "and he is willing for you to take the car out in the evenings."

"Yeah?" said Krebs, who was not fully awake. "Take the car out? Yeah?"

"Yes. Your father has felt for some time that you should be able to take the car out in the evenings whenever you wished but we only talked it over last night."

"I'll bet you made him," Krebs said.

"No. It was your father's suggestion that we talk the matter over."

## A CLOSER LOOK: SOCIAL INFLUENCES

### The Decade That Roared

#### INFORMATIONAL • MATERIALS •

Harold Krebs finds his hometown much the same as he left it before the war, except for new styles in women's hair and clothing. He especially notices girls' short, bobbed hair—a style that had marked a girl as fast only a few years earlier, when he shipped out to the trenches of France.

**The flap over flappers.** Krebs was right on target. As the slick, sophisticated ads of the era show, nothing symbolized the decade after World War I so well as the flapper—a liberated young woman who cropped her hair into a cap-like shape, wore half the amount of clothing of her Victorian-era counterpart, and boldly wore rouge and lipstick. The flapper abandoned the confines of the corset and opted instead for loose, long-waisted dresses that ended at or above the knee. She showed off her legs in the new silk or rayon stockings that were affordable at every income level. And she kicked, shim-

mied, and swayed in a wild, new dance called the Charleston.

**An era of excess.** Tired of war and disillusioned with political and social causes, city dwellers and even small-town residents yearned for fun and excitement in the Roaring Twenties. Millions of Americans purchased automobiles and took to the road on touring vacations. Consumerism grew by leaps and bounds, fueled by abundant advertising and easy credit plans. Popular entertainment filled people's leisure time: Commercial radio and the movies changed American life by forming a national mass culture. People devoured the sensational stories of the day—vivid reports of scandals, crimes, freak disasters, and sports exploits. Young and old alike reveled in learning details of the private lives of movie stars like Rudolph Valentino, writers like Edna St. Vincent Millay (page 127), sports figures like Babe Ruth and the American Indian athlete Jim Thorpe, and celebrities like the pilot Charles Lindbergh.



"Yeah. I'll bet you made him," Krebs sat up in bed.

"Will you come down to breakfast, Harold?" his mother said.

"As soon as I get my clothes on," Krebs said.

His mother went out of the room and he could hear her frying something downstairs while he washed, shaved and dressed to go down into the dining-room for breakfast. While he was eating breakfast his sister brought in the mail.

"Well, Hare," she said. "You old sleepy-head. What do you ever get up for?"

Krebs looked at her. He liked her. She was his best sister.

"Have you got the paper?" he asked.

She handed him *The Kansas City Star* and he shucked off its brown wrapper and opened it to the sporting page. He folded *The Star* open and propped it against the water pitcher with his cereal dish to steady it, so he could read while he ate.

"Harold," his mother stood in the kitchen doorway, "Harold, please don't muss up the paper. Your father can't read his *Star* if it's been mussed."

"I won't muss it," Krebs said.

His sister sat down at the table and watched him while he read.

"We're playing indoor over at school this afternoon," she said. "I'm going to pitch."

"Good," said Krebs. "How's the old wing?"<sup>3</sup>

"I can pitch better than lots of the boys. I tell them all you taught me. The other girls aren't much good."

"Yeah?" said Krebs.

"I tell them all you're my beau.<sup>4</sup> Aren't you my beau, Hare?"

"You bet."

3. wing *n.*: arm.

4. beau (*bō*) *n.*: boyfriend.



Charleston endurance contest (1926).

Crazes spread throughout the country—manias for the Chinese game of mahjong, six-day bicycle races, dance marathons, and even flagpole sitting. Jazz, one of the great African American

contributions to popular culture, provided the exciting soundtrack to the era.

**The young rebels.** Women and men alike, more aware of modernist thought and the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud, called for new social freedoms. Young people rebelled against the tight moral codes and even the good manners of the prewar years. They scoffed at the prohibition on alcohol by inventing the private cocktail party. With the new availability of motorcars, people roared off to dances in places where no one knew them, where they could feel free of their inhibitions. Couples danced together closer than ever before, tangoing and fox-trotting cheek to cheek to the sound of the saxophone.

The twenties' emphasis on youth and openness is recognizably modern. At the time many Americans were shocked and outraged by what they saw as the deterioration of culture and values. The 1920s were a rowdy, roisterous time—a decade that roared.



"Couldn't your brother really be your beau just because he's your brother?"

"I don't know."

"Sure you know. Couldn't you be my beau, Hare, if I was old enough and if you wanted to?"

"Sure. You're my girl now."

"Am I really your girl?"

"Sure."

"Do you love me?"

"Uh, huh."

"Will you love me always?"

"Sure."

"Will you come over and watch me play indoor?"

"Maybe."

"Aw, Hare, you don't love me. If you loved me, you'd want to come over and watch me play indoor."

Krebs's mother came into the dining-room from the kitchen. She carried a plate with two fried eggs and some crisp bacon on it and a plate of buckwheat cakes.

"You run along, Helen," she said. "I want to talk to Harold."

She put the eggs and bacon down in front of him and brought in a jug of maple syrup for the buckwheat cakes. Then she sat down across the table from Krebs.

"I wish you'd put down the paper a minute, Harold," she said.

Krebs took down the paper and folded it.

"Have you decided what you are going to do yet, Harold?" his mother said, taking off her glasses.

"No," said Krebs.

"Don't you think it's about time?" His mother did not say this in a mean way. She seemed worried.

"I hadn't thought about it," Krebs said.

"God has some work for every one to do," his mother said. "There can be no idle hands in His Kingdom."

"I'm not in His Kingdom," Krebs said.

"We are all of us in His Kingdom."

Krebs felt embarrassed and resentful as always.

"I've worried about you so much, Harold," his mother went on. "I know the temptations

you must have been exposed to. I know how weak men are. I know what your own dear grandfather, my own father, told us about the Civil War and I have prayed for you. I pray for you all day long, Harold."

Krebs looked at the bacon fat hardening on his plate.

"Your father is worried, too," his mother went on. "He thinks you have lost your ambition, that you haven't got a definite aim in life. Charley Simmons, who is just your age, has a good job and is going to be married. The boys are all settling down; they're all determined to get somewhere; you can see that boys like Charley Simmons are on their way to being really a credit to the community."

Krebs said nothing.

"Don't look that way, Harold," his mother said. "You know we love you and I want to tell you for your own good how matters stand. Your father does not want to hamper your freedom. He thinks you should be allowed to drive the car. If you want to take some of the nice girls out riding with you, we are only too pleased. We want you to enjoy yourself. But you are going to have to settle down to work, Harold. Your father doesn't care what you start in at. All work is honorable as he says. But you've got to make a start at something. He asked me to speak to you this morning and then you can stop in and see him at his office."

"Is that all?" Krebs said.

"Yes. Don't you love your mother, dear boy?"

"No," Krebs said.

His mother looked at him across the table. Her eyes were shiny. She started crying.

"I don't love anybody," Krebs said.

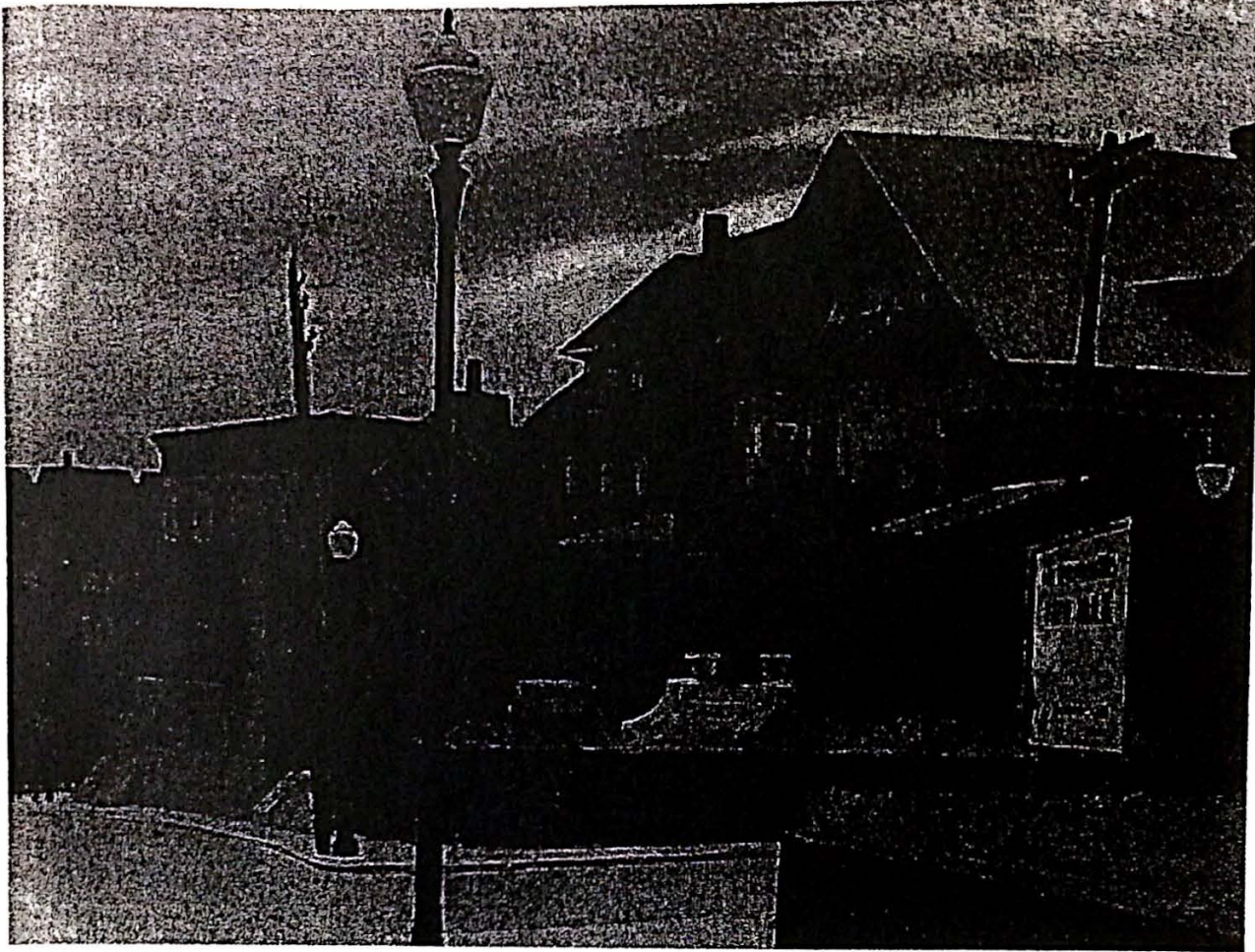
It wasn't any good. He couldn't tell her, he couldn't make her see it. It was silly to have said it. He had only hurt her. He went over and took hold of her arm. She was crying with her head in her hands.

"I didn't mean it," he said. "I was just angry at something. I didn't mean I didn't love you."

His mother went on crying. Krebs put his arm on her shoulder.

"Can't you believe me, mother?"





*East Wind over Weehawken* (1934) by Edward Hopper. Oil on canvas (34" x 50 1/4").

His mother shook her head.

"Please, please, mother. Please believe me."

"All right," his mother said chokily. She looked up at him. "I believe you, Harold."

Krebs kissed her hair. She put her face up to him.

"I'm your mother," she said. "I held you next to my heart when you were a tiny baby."

Krebs felt sick and vaguely nauseated.

"I know, Mummy," he said. "I'll try and be a good boy for you."

"Would you kneel and pray with me, Harold?" his mother asked.

They knelt down beside the dining-room table and Krebs's mother prayed.

"Now, you pray, Harold," she said.

"I can't," Krebs said.

"Try, Harold."

"I can't."

"Do you want me to pray for you?"

"Yes."

So his mother prayed for him and then they stood up and Krebs kissed his mother and went out of the house. He had tried so to keep his life from being complicated. Still, none of it had touched him. He had felt sorry for his mother and she had made him lie. He would go to Kansas City and get a job and she would feel all right about it. There would be one more scene maybe before he got away. He would not go down to his father's office. He would miss that one. He wanted his life to go smoothly. It had just gotten going that way. Well, that was all over now, anyway. He would go over to the schoolyard and watch Helen play indoor baseball. ■



## Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech, 1954



**H**aving no facility for speech making and no command of oratory nor any domination of rhetoric, I wish to thank the administrators of the generosity of Alfred Nobel for this prize.

No writer who knows the great writers who did not receive the prize can accept it other than with humility. There is no need to list these writers. Everyone here may make his own list according to his knowledge and his conscience.

It would be impossible for me to ask the ambassador of my country to read a speech in which a writer said all of the things which are in his heart. Things may not be immediately discernible in what a man writes, and in this sometimes he is fortunate; but eventually they are quite clear and by these and the degree of alchemy<sup>1</sup> that he possesses he will endure or be forgotten.

Writing, at its best, is a lonely life. Organizations for writers palliate<sup>2</sup> the writer's loneliness, but I doubt if they improve his writing. He grows in public stature as he sheds his loneliness, and often his work deteriorates. For he does his work alone, and if he is a good enough writer he must face eternity, or the lack of it, each day.

For a true writer each book should be a new beginning where he tries again for something that is beyond attainment. He should always try for something that has never been



Ernest Hemingway (left) receiving the medal for the Nobel Prize in literature (1954).

done or that others have tried and failed. Then sometimes, with great luck, he will succeed.

How simple the writing of literature would be if it were only necessary to write in another way what has been well written. It is because we have had such great writers in the past that a writer is driven far out past where he can go, out to where no one can help him.

I have spoken too long for a writer. A writer should write what he has to say and not speak it. Again I thank you.

1. **alchemy** *n.*: magical power to transform the ordinary into the extraordinary. Alchemy was a branch of medieval science, one aim of which was to change common metals such as lead into gold.
2. **palliate** (*pal'ē-āt'*) *v.*: ease; lessen.



# Literary Response and Analysis

## Reading Check


1. Describe the way Krebs spends his days.
2. What is Krebs's reaction to reading a history of the battles he fought in?
3. What makes Krebs decide to leave home?

## Interpretations

4. By the time Krebs returned, his hometown had quit "the greeting of heroes" and "the reaction had set in." What is this reaction? How does it affect Krebs?
5. What does Krebs mean by wanting "to live along without consequences"? Why might he feel that way?
6. What does Krebs's statement "You did not need a girl unless you thought about them" reveal about how he adapted to the hardships of war? How might such an adjustment affect his life at home?
7. Describe the **conflicts** revealed in the conversation between Mrs. Krebs and Harold at the end of the story. What losses on Harold's part does the talk reveal?
8. How would you state the **theme** of "Soldier's Home"—what does the story reveal to you about the way war can affect a young soldier?
9. How is Krebs an example of an **anti-hero**? How does he compare with the young **protagonists** of today's books and movies?
10. Ernest Hemingway himself was viewed as a member of the lost generation, scarred by the horrors of World War I. What details in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech (see the **Primary Source** on page 618) reflect the attitudes of a modern antihero?

## Writing

### Krebs in Analysis

Write a **character profile** of Krebs, using the notes you took as you read the story. Be sure to support your analysis of Krebs with details from the story. 

### The Tip of the Iceberg

Ernest Hemingway once remarked of his writing style, "I always try to write on the principle of the iceberg. There is seven-eighths of it underwater for every part that shows." In a brief **essay**, explain what you think he means, and use examples from "Soldier's Home" to explain the "iceberg principle." Be sure to answer the question: What parts of "Soldier's Home" are underwater?

### The Decade That . . .

On pages 614–615 is a description of the Roaring Twenties. Using this essay as a model, write a **description** of a recent decade that you know fairly well. Be sure to describe the following aspects of life in your decade: fashions; gender issues; popular entertainment; social and philosophical attitudes; and crazes, or fads.

## Vocabulary Development

### What If?

In a small group, discuss the possible outcomes of these scenarios:

1. What if **hysteria** spread through a crowd of fans at a rock concert?
2. What if an **atrocities** charge against the military were covered up?
3. What if an employer discovered that the work history on a résumé was **apocryphal**?
4. What if the United States were to pull out of all of its military **alliances**?
5. How could an ambitious person use **intrigue** to get ahead?



### Reading Standard 3.5c

Evaluate the political, ethical, and social influences of the historical period that shaped the characters, plots, and settings.

### Reading Standard 3.6

Analyze the ways in which authors throughout the centuries have used archetypes drawn from myth and tradition in literature.